NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

January 22, 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR

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Assistant to the President
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SUBJECT: Cleared Q & As on National Space Policy

The attached questions and answers associated with the recently signed national space policy are provided for your use in responding to media and public queries. Your cooperation in ensuring a consistent Administration response on this matter is appreciated.

Paul Schott Stevens
Executive Secretary

Attachment
Tab A National Space Policy Q & As

TAB A

NATIONAL SPACE POLICY

Q: How long was the policy in preparation?

A: The Interagency Group for Space (IG-Space) held its first meeting on July 31, 1987, to begin revising existing national space policy. The Senior Interagency Group for Space (SIG-Space) held its final review meeting on December 17, 1987. The remaining time until the President signed the new policy was devoted to final administrative preparation of the directive, and final policy and legal review.

Q: What agencies participated in preparing the new policy directive?

A: SIG-Space member agencies include the National Security Council Staff (chair); the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, and Transportation; representatives of the Director of Central Intelligence, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. In addition, the Treasury Department participated throughout the review process.

Q: Why did it take so long?

A: This was a comprehensive review of all aspects of national space policy--the first since 1982.

Q: The trade press reported that the interagency process encountered numerous serious arguments among the agencies. Will you comment?

A: Over the course of the review, a range of options was considered on the various issues. The important thing is that any differences that existed were resolved in an

orderly process that thoroughly examined all of the options identified.

Q: Did some of the issues go to the President for resolution?

A: I will not comment on the specific issues considered by SIG-Space or the President. Suffice it to say that a structured process exists to obtain decisions within the interagency process when consensus cannot be obtained.

Q: Was the reestablishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Council considered during the policy review? If so, why was the idea rejected?

A: The idea was surfaced during deliberations, but it did not enjoy much support. Replacing one interagency process (SIG-Space) with another (the Space Council) accomplishes little. The President has established an effective interagency process not only for space, but for all important U.S. matters that cut across agency boundaries. To single space out for different treatment would invite other areas to demand their own tailored decision-making process--a sure recipe for bureaucratic gridlock. SIG-Space works as an effective forum for senior-level consideration of space issues, and if agreement cannot be obtained there, an orderly process exists to elevate decisions and if necessary, secure Presidential decisions. The very fact that SIG-Space was able to produce this revised national space policy attests to its effectiveness.

Q: How did the SIG-Space process and the Economic Policy Council's deliberations on space commercialization work -- together or separately?

A: SIG-Space was responsible for the revision of national space policy, integrating all the broad elements of governmental space activity (civil and national security) as well as private sector, nongovernmental space activities. To encourage the private sector, SIG-Space developed policies to make certain that the government avoids actions that may deter or preclude the development of the commercial sector, and within a framework that ensures that government agencies are reliable customers for private sector space goods and services. Consistent with this policy, the EPC, consistent with its central role for private-sector space activities, developed a number of significant commercial space initiatives to further these overall national objectives for space commercialization. In summary, the efforts were complementary, well-coordinated, and substantial numbers of the participants were involved in both processes.

Q: Were the reports of the National Commission on Space (Paine Report) and Sally Ride's report on "Leadership and America's Future in Space" used in the preparation of this revised space policy?

A: Both of these reports were considered in the preparation of this policy.

Q: What else was used?

A: IG-Space representatives used a wide variety of source documentation including previous National Security Decision Directives relating to space, proposals developed by the Economic Policy Council's Commercial Space Working Group, testimony before Congressional committees, as well as numerous editorials and policy papers on the topic of

America's future in space. Other key sources of information were comparisons that were accomplished of U.S. space activities versus those of other countries in three areas: civil, commercial, and national security.

Q: Can you comment on the conclusions of these comparisons?

A: In general, these studies do not support claims that the U.S. is years behind the Soviets in space capabilities, popular impressions of "lost U.S. leadership in space" notwithstanding. The reality is that in most important areas the U.S. is ahead technologically. In fact, by most important quantifiable measures (data accuracy, timeliness, quality, and quantity), U.S. space systems are the world's finest and will remain so for the foreseeable future (notable exceptions are in manned spaceflight, deployed ASAT capabilities, and space transportation systems). Most comparisons that appear in the trade and popular press have highlighted the fact that U.S. manned and unmanned launch systems suffered disastrous accidents that essentially prevented launch of most U.S. space systems in 1986 and most of 1987. While true, these statements rarely go on to say that the U.S. has made major technical and policy changes to prevent a recurrence of these launch problems. Moreover, the successful Titan launches at both east and west coasts late last year have signalled that all U.S. expendable launch vehicles are once again operational, and we're confident the Shuttle will be returned to safe, reliable operation later this year. Furthermore, during the launch

hiatus caused by the Shuttle and Titan failures, our on-orbit spacecraft continued to function extraordinarily well and provided us with necessary services through that difficult period. That fact attests to the quality of our space systems. The U.S. does not need to duplicate Soviet space capabilities; we must use space systems efficiently to support U.S. requirements. The comparisons point out that the U.S. is not preeminent in every aspect and discipline of space activity. However, our space policy acknowledges that space leadership in an increasingly competitive international environment does not demand this universal preeminence; rather, it states that the U.S. objective is leadership in those areas critical to important U.S. goals.

Q: What are the implications of these assessments?

A: In the civil sector, the assessment revealed that the space capabilities of our competitors are indeed growing, and in some cases, at a more rapid rate than ours. However, in most critical areas (space transportation and manned spaceflight being notable exceptions) U.S. technological capabilities remain the best in the world. It is clear, though, that the launch hiatus has diminished the traditional U.S. lead in several key science and exploration areas--a trend that will continue until the Space Shuttle is returned to safe, reliable operation and we begin to launch the backlog of important civil payloads that are awaiting access to space.

In the national security area, U.S. space capabilities, under conditions short of direct attack on our space systems, are clearly superior to those of our potential adversaries. In the event of a conflict involving attacks on space systems, our technological lead would tend to be offset by demonstrated Soviet antisatellite capabilities for which the U.S. has no direct counterpart. Nonetheless, the national security space sector has taken a number of steps to assure continued mission capability even if we experience failures in our on-orbit or launch assets, whether from natural causes or hostile action.

In commercial space systems, U.S. efforts, although still in an embryonic stage, promise important economic, industrial base, and national security benefits as long as government policies continue to provide a climate conducive to sustained commercial growth in space-related activities. As a direct result of these policies, American firms are aggressively marketing launch services worldwide and, to date, U.S. ELV companies have signed contracts to launch 12 satellites, contributing approximately $500 million to the U.S. balance of trade. Investments totaling approximately $400 million have been made in this emerging business by commercial expendable launch vehicle (ELV) companies, which may result in the creation of some 8,000 new jobs. For its part, the U.S. Government is making its facilities and services available to commercial launch firms at direct cost. Martin Marietta Corporation, General Dynamics

Corporation, and Space Services, Inc. have each signed agreements agreements with the U.S. Government to use national launch facilities. A streamlined licensing process, administered by DOT, is already in place.

Q: In exactly what areas are the Soviets ahead?

A: The Soviets are pursuing particularly aggressive programs in areas of long-duration manned spaceflight and heavy-lift launch capability which serve particular Soviet needs for which there is not always a direct U.S. counterpart. And, as previously mentioned, the operational Soviet antisatellite program is a continuing and troublesome asymmetry.

Q: Is NASA's budget adequate to ensure U.S. leadership?

A: The President's FY 1989 budget, to be submitted to Congress shortly, supports the objective of space leadership in areas of critical importance to the U.S. while remaining consistent with the President's commitment to deficit reduction. "Leadership" is achieved not through just NASA's budget, but through the funding requested for all U.S. government space activities, as well as the important contributions provided by the U.S. private sector. The budget provides for a carefully balanced strategy of research, development , operations, and technologies for science, exploration, and appropriate applications. NASA's FY 1989 funding request is a significant increase over the funds appropriated in FY 1988. NASA agrees that the FY 1989

budget projections support the civil leadership objectives in the policy.

Q: Would you explain what the establishment of this human exploration goal means? Is this a commitment to fly people to Mars or return to the Moon? What is the dollar commitment associated with the Pathfinder technology program announced in the policy?

A: This new long-range goal establishes the general direction and focus for efforts and technologies guiding the Nation's civil space sector.

It is not a commitment to any particular mission at this time. It is premature now to decide whether Mars, the Moon, or even another body in the solar system represents the appropriate pathway for future exploration. We first need to understand the many challenges that such potential future missions would encounter. The Pathfinder technology program consists of studies and research efforts to examine the key challenges expected before mission-specific decisions are made.

The funding for the Pathfinder program is contained in the President's FY 1989 budget, to be submitted to Congress shortly.

Q: When would a specific manned planetary decision be made?

A: Decisions on manned planetary programs will follow when such programs can be realistically achieved. As we learn more about the long-term aspects of living and working in space, identifying and meeting the technical challenges ahead of us, the more we will understand about when and where specific programs are possible. Until we have the results

from Pathfinder, it is premature to speculate when a manned planetary mission might be appropriate. As we study such programs, we will also begin to understand and consider the cost implications as an input into when the Nation could afford the associated investment.

Q: Isn't this just another way for the Administration to delay indefinitely a real leadership decision on America's next big space program?

A: No. The Administration has committed to the long-term goal of human expansion, and proposes the Pathfinder program as the best way to reach a realistic decision on specific missions to achieve this new goal. To do otherwise at this time, by committing prematurely, for example to a manned mission to Mars by a certain date, could turn out to be a hasty, costly, and even dangerous decision based on current data and technology.

Q: Might the U.S. and the Soviets cooperate in a future manned mission?

A: International cooperation is a goal of U.S. space policy. Such cooperation will consider U.S. national security, foreign policy, scientific and economic interests. The current U.S. - Soviet cooperative agreement on space (signed April 15, 1987) outlines cooperation in 16 space science projects, all unmanned. These projects could conceivably form the basis for discussions concerning future cooperative manned missions, but it is very premature to speculate on such cooperation. The U.S. has not committed itself to any manned mission to Mars, and the current budget situation makes such an outlook, even in the future, difficult at

best. Moreover, we are presently rebuilding our space cooperation relationship with the Soviet Union after a five year interruption, and it will take some time to restore confidence to the level at which more ambitious cooperative projects could be considered.

In the manned realm, NASA's Space Station program continues to be the focus of our international efforts through the end of this century, emphasizing the cooperation with friends and allies which the President is seeking.

Q: Why has the military space budget been rising faster than NASA's?

A: Decisions on military space spending are made within the overall DOD budget based on the contribution that space systems make in the overall national security strategy and independent military requirements. Rising military space spending reflects recognition that military space activities are increasingly critical to our national security. Part of the increase in DOD's space spending reflects the costs associated with its launch recovery program initiated in the aftermath of the ELV and Space Shuttle Challenger accidents.

Q: Doesn't this risk military dominance over civil space activities?

A: As the new space policy states, the civil and national security sectors of the overall space effort are distinct and independent, responding to their own requirements, yet they are strongly interacting to avoid unnecessary duplication. The relative magnitude of the efforts should not be the focus of attention as each responds to

independent requirements, and funding for one sector is not at the expense of another.

Q: What restrictions remain on government regulation of civil Earth remote sensing?

A: There are no predetermined limitations or restrictions on the performance of civil Earth remote sensing systems. In reviewing licensing applications for civil Earth remote sensing systems, the federal government will consider national security and foreign policy factors, including those required by law. Such considerations have not precluded licensing in the past. A key national space policy objective is to encourage US-operated commercial systems that are competitive with or superior to foreign-operated systems.

Q: What about the Soviet lead in heavy lift launch systems; doesn't this provide them with a significant advantage?

A: Not necessarily. U.S. launch capability responds to identified launch requirements, as it did during the Apollo program when the Saturn V provided the necessary lift. The current and planned family of U.S. launch vehicles meets all current U.S. launch needs. On the other hand, we do not completely understand how the Soviets will use their heavy lift capability. It could certainly give them new capabilities for manned space activities or planetary missions. It could also allow them to duplicate military capabilities we have achieved using lower weight systems. In addition, the President has recently (1-4-88) approved the management and funding plan for the joint DOD-NASA

Advanced Launch System program which will address the future U.S. need for more capable launch systems by the end of the 1990s.

Q: What role do U.S. commercial space ventures play in this new policy?

A: The policy clarifies and reaffirms the government's commitment to rely on the private sector for space-related goods and services where feasible and commercially available. Both "feasible" and "commercially available" are defined in the policy. It directs that U.S. government actions that preclude or deter commercial space activities, except for national security and public safety, are to be avoided. By seeking to eliminate laws and regulations that unnecessarily impede the private sector, the policy seeks to encourage the private sector and allow the space environment to become another arena for free enterprise.

Q: What does the policy have to say about commercial launch vehicles?

A: Commercial launch operations are recognized as an integral part of the Nation's launch strategy. DOT's lead role within the government for establishing Federal policy and regulatory guidance affecting commercial launch operations is reaffirmed. The policy also directs government agencies to encourage a domestic commercial launch industry by contracting for necessary ELV launch services directly from the private sector whenever feasible. It also provides guidelines for the use of government launch-related facilities by U.S. commercial launch operators.

Q: Most of the policy seems to focus on launch systems and commercialization. Does this imply that space science is being downgraded?

A: No, quite the contrary. Under this policy, the first objective of U.S. civil space activities is to expand knowledge of the Earth, its environment, the solar system, and the universe. This policy, and the implementing guidelines, reaffirm the long-standing objective of supporting a vigorous and far-reaching program of space science.

Q: What about unmanned space exploration? Are we ending this program?

A: No, not at all. The policy guidelines state that NASA will conduct a balanced program of manned and unmanned exploration. The new guidelines on unmanned exploration make the importance of this activity to the achievement of overall space objectives clear. The fact is that we need both manned and unmanned exploration, with determinations made on the basis of cost, safety, suitability, and expected results given the specific mission objectives involved.

Q: What is the significance of the policy statement on space debris?

A: We have long recognized that space debris could have an impact on future space missions. NASA and the Air Force have had the problem under study for several years, and the DOD has addressed the issue in its own space policy statement last year. Space debris is a long-term problem which has complex technical and economic implications. An interagency group will be established to consider this issue

fully and to make recommendations on actions we can take that are cost effective and consistent with mission requirements.

Q: Isn't this (space debris) an international problem? What are other countries doing? The U.N.?

A: In the long run, solving the space debris problem will require action by all major spacefaring nations and organizations. Several countries have expressed concern about the problem, and the issue has been mentioned in the committees of the International Telecommunications Union and in the U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. However, the general feeling is that it is premature for discussion in the U.N. and that it would be a mistake to rush through politically-driven measures to deal with this problem. We do not believe there are any simple, easy solutions to the space debris issue.

Q: What are the reasons for including a statement on continued government support for research and development of advanced space communications technologies?

A: Our review reaffirmed that space communications are critical to a wide range of U.S. goals. NASA's past work in developing and transferring communications satellite technology to industry resulted in a commercial space communications program of unparalleled success. The policy recognizes the need for an active U.S. Government role in developing appropriate space communications technologies to meet special government needs.

Q: In your guidance and implementation section, you refer to studies of financing alternatives for the space

infrastructure developments. What are space infrastructural elements?

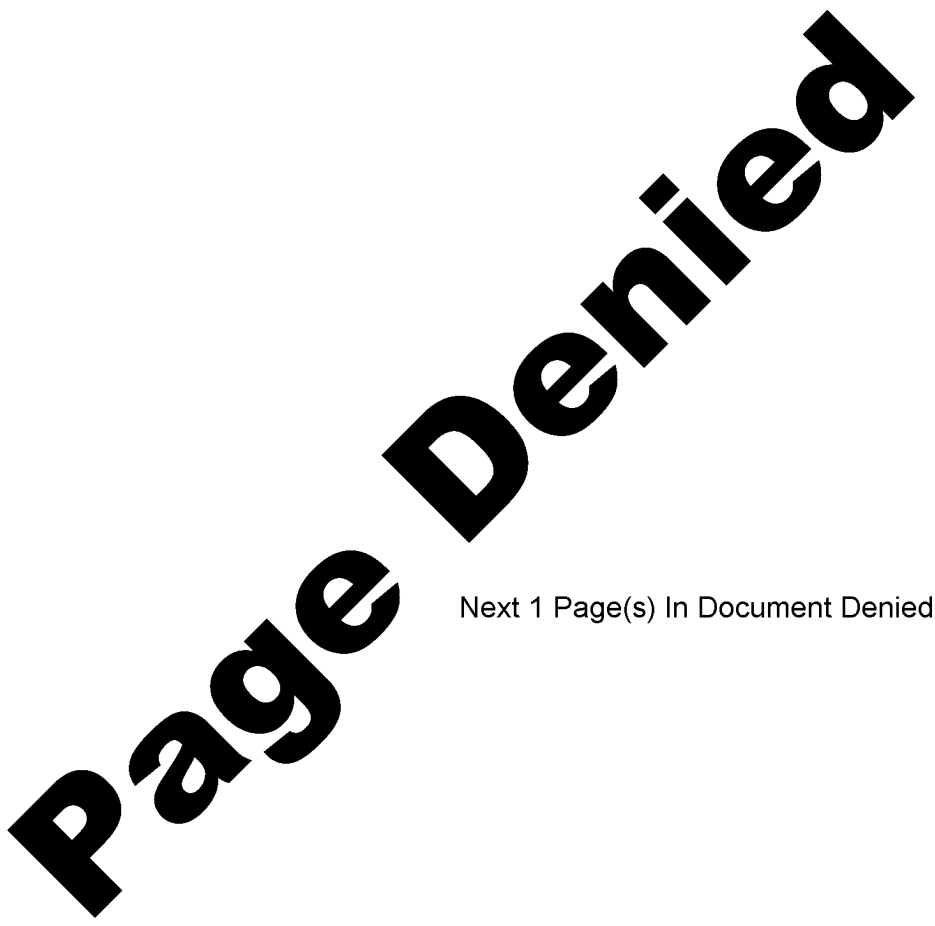
A: These are the elements not used up or degraded by their role in supporting a specific mission. Ground and (eventually space) deployed support facilities; nonrecurring development and production costs; space utilities; space habitats, etc., are examples.

Q: What are the objectives of the infrastructure financing study?

A: We would like to understand the opportunities and potential for enlisting the private sector capital sources in the initiatives, risk assumption and the profit potential of space undertakings. The desirability of such undertakings, the specific mechanisms, the legislative or regulatory procedures, the relationships to the mission-responsible agencies, the cash flow and profitability are essential expected results.

Q: Does the policy say anything about SDI?

A: The policy does state that DOD will ensure that the military space program incorporates the support requirements of the Strategic Defense Initiative.



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